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AUTHOR Kaplan, Paul S.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes two types of teacher educators, discusses "in" and "out"phrases of educational jargon, and concludes with six proposals. The author criticizes teachers who teach six months in a ghetto school and then write a book about the terrible teaching of their colleagues; and he criticizes teacher educators in large universities who stay as far away as possible from the primary experience of teaching. Problems of the use of educational in-terms are discussed and exemplified by "education experimentation" and "discipline." The following proposals conclude this paper: (a) periodic mandatory stays in inner-city schools; (b) significant research directly applicable to large educational systems performed by competent and impartial experimenters; (c) a new look at the realities involved in mass education without the use of oversimplified in-words and cliches; (d) a nonbiased, realistic look at the problems of discipline within the classroom setting; (e) consideration of possible change that falls within the realm of present-day reality; and (f) a stop to the ridiculous and divisive rhetoric that divides all concerned educators. (PD)

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Paul S. Kaplan

A NOTE FROM THE OTHER SIDE

I sat anxiously and nervously staring at the blackboard in front of the room. Should I suffer the slings and arrows of immense criticism from professor and peer group, or should I, as it is put in the vernacular, "cop out". The alternatives were strinkingly clear. After long deliberation I started writing my essay concerning solutions to the many and varied problems of the city's large public school system. I knew what the professor wanted and I decided to give it to him.

With both barrels blazing I wrote about how we strip the children of their individuality, how education is not relevant, and how we must educate the whole child. After this initial forray came the heavy artillery- a dig at the unthinking, non-humanistic, discipline minded professional who systematically turns the hope of humanity, the schools, into places that are grim and joyless. The piece de resistance came when I passionately described the "newer" methods of teaching and the hope of "radical" educational methods for the improvement of our schools.

Thinking back to that examination forces me to wonder how many other students taking education courses also "copped-out" and gave the popular tear down responses desired instead of questioning the phraseology and "new " conceptual foundations. It also forces me to examine the reasons for such conformity of criticism found in most schools of education in large universities.

It would seem that conformity of criticism comes about due to the two distinct types of teacher educators found in universities today. This is not to state that all teacher educators fall neatly into these two categories, but as I describe them it will become obvious that these two types are the most vocal and tend to be

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the most influential members of their departments.

The Two Types of Teacher Educators

It is often a great shock to me how teachers who have taught for six months in a ghetto school, write a book describing how terrible their colleagues teach, and are believed by everyone in the educational college establishment. Many of these six month specials then become professors of education, educational consultants, newspaper or magazine commentators and in general become nationally known experts in the field of education. They never seem to return to the public school classroom. Never do their colleagues who continue to work in these schools get a chance to speak. They are condemned without trial. Everyone identifies with the underdog, the great teacher in a sea of mediocrity or worse, and the white knight in shining armor always gets the prize of public sympathy.

For once I would like to hear the other side. I would like to hear the teacher who has stayed for fifteen or twenty years working in the schools, whose books since they may not have the good-guy, bad-guy dichotomy, the hero-heel appeal, do not become best sellers. I would like to hear him speak about what he obviously knows best - the inner city school system.

The second type of teacher educators found in large universities stays as far as possible away from the primary experience of teaching. Perhaps then he may criticize without ever having to test himself or his ideas in the real world of education. This general type of college educational instructor typically has been out of the elementary, junior high school, or high school classroom for many years. There is even a possibility that he has never even

been in one. He is quite vociferous in his condemnation of current educational practices and the only time he sets foot into a school is to observe a student teacher or to do some educational experiment, often with an inadequate sample. I believe that one of the reasons that education courses are usually considered of little "relevance" to the classroom teacher is that they are taught by people who have rarely if ever been exposed to the realities of public education.

Both of these teachers, the six month reformer and the "never taught" teacher educator are always touted as concerned educators while the ten, fifteen or twenty year veteran of the classroom is often villified, labelled as barbaric in some circumstances and condemned. For some strange reason he is never called concerned or dedicated. The fact that these college instructors are often divorced for whatever reason from reality, leads to the construction of a vague, new jargon for the "concerned" consisting of euphemisms, in-phrases and concepts and easy solutions and target finding for complicated problems.

In-Phrases and Out-Phrases

The decade of the 1960's saw an elucidation and growing awareness of the many problems and potentialities of the ghetto. When educators used the many traditional approaches with their students success did not crown their efforts in the main. The reasons for this are many and varied, depending upon who you are reading at the time and who is in vogue. One of the favorite targets for "blame" became the middle class usually white teacher. According to the conventional wisdom of these educationologists, the middle class teachers impose their value systems on ghetto

youth. No explicit statements of what these value systems are is usually forthcoming. The public only hears the rhetoric, the phrase dangerous middle class values and words like impose, and surmises the rest. It is one of the in-answers.

The advocacy of more Black teachers in schools is another. I'm still waiting for concrete, controlled scientific experimentation performed by neutral scientists concerning the superiority of Black teachers in our ghetto schools based upon race alone. The thinking is that Black students will learn more and display a better achievement record with Black teachers due to identification and better understanding. under the criteria of achievement, I'm still waiting for an answer. The silence is deafening. If the idea is to simply obtain a more integrated staff because the environment in the schools would be more conducive to an integrated society outside the schools and various other worthy ideals then let us say this. The public wants good teachers be they Black, White or Red.

To go through the glossary of in-terms would require much paper and tedium. Educating the whole child, humanistic education, individual attention, needs of the child, and that most overused of all educational jargon "relevance" have become overused and under-understood. After reading much literature on the subject, relevance seems to be defined as what you personally think should be taught. Our jargon has become stultifying, divisive between classroom teacher and teacher educator and actually misleading to the public who foots the bill.

The new answer to our problems and certainly the rage today is Summerhill. It is certainly not my intention of casting aspersions

an an educational experiment of worth and value. However, the manner in which it is being used is a rather inexcusible one. Like so many rages which have had some real value to them, Summerhill has been looked at, and despite the author's warnings held on a pedestal as the model for modern education. I hesitate to add a crusher.

I wonder what would happen if students were living twenty four hours a day in a traditional school, in which there are few students and a good staff, in which a spirit is engendered of specialness and opportunity above and beyond the norm and has all the advantages of a school like Summerhill? I would not be surprised if it would be quite successful. Right now the only thing in common between Summerhill and a big city public school system is a lack of funds. I'm again eagerly waiting for an experiment of stature, with a large sample using new experimental methods. Perhaps then and only then will the true value of radical educational methods such as Summerhill be made manifest. Our real challenge is mass education. Let's admit it and work with it in mind.

Educational Experimentation

If we are to incorporate change on a widespread basis it is clear that large scale experimentation must be used. Our journals are filled to the brim with successful educational experimentation. I can't remember very many unsuccessful experiments. If a program has not quite lived up to expectations, it may still be deemed a success through a series of questionaires and self report schedules, and then quietly filed away. The question is, why are these successful experiments of little or no help to the front line teacher?

Why is transferability such a problem? Let me submit that the difficulty rests in some measure upon the lack of sample and time sequence. Educational experimentation rarely takes into consideration the Hawthorne or novelty effects. The samples tend to be small and reality problems such as vandalism of equipment, repair etc. are rarely if ever discussed. I understand that not all experimentation need be practical, but certainly much experimentation that claims to be is of dubious value.

The only way for educational experimentation to come out of the dark ages is to run far reaching, large scale experiments measurable by specific instruments and administered by outsiders if possible. These experiments must be run with the idea and prospect of wide applicability to mass education. If this means cutting the sheer amount of experimentation due to funding problems so be it. As of date hundreds of successful experiments have not been applied and are waiting on the shelf. Let's use them, see if they are applicable, and , if not, scuttle them.

Discipline

One area where a great deal more experimentation is required is that of discipline. It is definitely an out-word today. Its usage conjures up the demons of corporal punishment, the mean old teacher with the ruler in her hand. The wicked man screaming at the poor helpless student. This is another example of how far from the real situation we have gone. There is no doubt that in cases this is so. However, the concept of keeping discipline is valid. It's difficult if not impossible to put all that supposed skill that you have learned in making lesson plans to work if you cannot even begin. Discipline is often non-verbal and

yet the stereotype of the teacher screaming in the classroom is the one which has been publicized. Few articles have been written in the area of the non-verbal skill of keeping discipline. Discipline need not be tyranical, but it must be there. To make it more palatable to the educational specialist we can call it by its new and recent euphemism "classroom management" Perhaps a reevaluation of the word and its meaning to education is required. The "disruptive" student (another out-phrase), identified by every teacher as such requires help. The teacher is usually the first to state this openly. The help is not available however, so the teacher is called on to act as clinical psychologist etc., which he is certainly not qualified to do. Since he cannot gain the required help, and training in the more enlightened and often more effective modes of "classroom management" is absent, he founders and finds himself unable to use whatever teaching skills he was supposed to have acquired in teacher training courses.

Please do not misunderstand this note. I am not in any way against change in education or in favor of rigid, unbending discipline. If anything I am more receptive to it because I have rejected the verbiage and rhetoric of the "new" education. The changes should be based upon valid experimentation and should be sponsored on a large scale. What I do object to are the artificial problem solvers, the use of popular political phrases, the education experts who have never taught in public schools or have taught for only a few months. I object to the reformers who close their eyes to the realities of the situation and who use simple, easy cliches where realistic assessments are necessary. So as to correct some of these abuses and help generations of teachers

who are yet to be trained, I make the following proposals.

1- Periodic mandatory stays in schools in the inner city where these educational experts and teacher trainers are required to teach actual classes every day for a certain amount of time. This will insure that these professionals keep in contact with reality.

2- Significant research be undertaken, even if smaller research programs must be curtailed, which will be directly applicable to large educational systems. This research should be performed by competent and impartial experimenters taking into consideration the Hawthorne and novelty effects.

3- A new look at the realities involved in mass education without the use of oversimplified in-words and cliches.

4- A non-biased realistic look at the problems of discipline within the classroom setting.

5- Consideration of possible change which falls within the realm of present day reality. Programs that require the separation of children from their parents for long periods of time or whose expeditures are beyond reason may sound inviting but are unrealistic and do not address themselves to immediate needs.

6- A stop to the rediculous and divisive rhetoric which divides all concerned educators. One of the great tasks of teacher educators today is to win back the confidence of the present day practitioner so that suggested, well thought out and experimentally validated changes may be instituted without the suspicion, the misunderstandings and the defensiveness that now pervades the situation.

It is my hope that the reader of this article will begin to look at things from the other side. The schism between teacher

educator and practitioner is wide and dangerous. We should be colleagues not antagonists. To redress grievances on all sides a great deal of understanding, dialogue and meaningful action must take place. I have described some of the areas in which the teacher educator can begin the rapprochement.

I have my doubts whether any of the journals which have, in the past, published so much of the work criticized in this paper will have the courage to print an article totally skeptical to the conventional wisdom in teacher education today. If this article is published I hope it serves to increase discussion in this heretofore lightly dismissed field. I hope the in-words will not be as readily accepted and that simple solutions to complex problems will be criticized. I hope it influences those who read it to question, to ask why the practicing teacher is rarely if ever given an opportunity to answer his critics. Finally, I hope future teachers will not "cop out" on educational examinations and will actively seek out the classroom professional for his expertise and valuable "front line" experience.